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ABSTRACT

Factorially derived aspects of religiousness, i.e., intrinsic, orthodoxy, practice, and cognitive, were examined in juxtaposition with indices of parental influence, sex-role identity and interpersonal style. The data were analyzed separately for boys (N=297) and girls (N=344) from several Catholic parochial schools. The results indicate that: (1) religiousness is related to sex-role self-definition in boys, but not in girls; (2) conversely, interpersonal dispositions are more predictive of religiousness in girls; and (3) patterns of parental influence, as they relate to religiousness, also differ for the two sexes. (Author)

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Parental, sex-role and interpersonal correlates of religiousness in adolescents

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Introduction

Most research shows higher religious commitment for women than men. Some theorists consider this a cultural product (Yinger, 1970) traceable to normative expectations about sex roles. Others maintain that more basic personality characteristics are involved (Garai, 1970) or attribute the differences to factors related to upbringing and parent-child relationships (D'Andrade, 1967; Hutt, 1972). This study attempts to assess sex differences on various dimensions of religiousness and the relative impact of parent-child relationships, sex-role definitions and basic personality traits on these dimensions.

The subjects were 641 students in private Catholic schools, grades seven through nine. The data were collected in the form of group-administered self-report materials.

Dimensions of religiousness

Items for religiousness were taken from an earlier study (Potvin et al., 1976). The list of items and the results of factor analysis are given in Table 1. Of the four factors that emerged, the first was termed the Intrinsic aspect of religion. This factor seems to combine Glock's experiential and consequential dimensions (1962). The second

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factor defines an aspect of religion that may be termed Orthodoxy, a traditional orientation within Glock's ideological dimension. The third factor is a doublet of items reflecting religious Practice (attendance at services and receiving communion), similar to Glock's ritualistic and Fukuyama's (1961) cultic dimension. The fourth may be termed the Cognitive (Fukuyama) or intellectual (Glock) aspect.

Personality measures

Scales from three separate domains of personality measurement were selected for this study: adolescent's perception of the parents behavior toward him/her; sex-role identity; and interpersonal style.

For the parental influence measures, the authors adapted two scales from their own instrument (Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969): parental Control and Affection.

For sex-role identity, a specially developed instrument was used yielding four scores: Activity, Potency, Sociability, and Expressiveness (Suziedelis, 1977). The first two are logically and empirically distinct aspects of masculinity: Activity refers to a self-perception as a competitive, energetic person; Potency, as a strong, aggressive person. Similarly, Sociability and Expressiveness reflect two distinct aspects of femininity: friendly, helpful, generous; and emotional, affectionate, gentle.

Interpersonal dispositions were measured by a brief form of an instrument that has been widely used in personality research, the Interpersonal Style Inventory (Lorr & Youniss, 1973). As used in this

study, the instrument yields scores on five dimensions: Extraverted, Socialized, Independent, Rule-bound and Open-minded.

In order to attenuate a possible confounding effect of social desirability, a special set of self-complimentary adjectives was composed (e.g. truthful, reasonable, mature,creative) and scored as the All-good self scale to be used as a covariate in the substantive analyses.

In addition to these personality measures, the subjects were also asked to rate, on a six-point scale, the frequency of attendance at religious services by the parents.

Descriptive statistics on all scales are given in Table 2.

Method of analysis

The data were processed by an application of the multiple regression/correlation analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). A combination of hierarchical and stepwise models was used. The four dimensions of religiousness were analyzed separately. In each case, sets of independent variables were entered in an order determined on apriori theoretical grounds (age; parental religious practice; All-good self; parental influence; sex-role identity; interpersonal style). If a particular set added significantly to prediction, its scales were then entered one-by-one stepwise to find those most heavily contributing to the prediction. The procedure yields a parsimonious set of predictors, each uniquely contributing to the prediction of the criterion over and above any predictors entered before it. Analyses

were carried out separately for each sex. The results are given in Table 3.

Discussion of results

Parental religious practice is clearly a major determinant of adolescent's religiousness, except perhaps for the Cognitive aspect.

The All-good self scale accounts for a significant portion of variance of religiousness in all its aspects for boys, and in the case of Intrinsic and Cognitive aspects for girls. The finding seems to suggest that religiousness in adolescents is associated with higher self-esteem. It may also be that within the context of the parochial school it is "socially desirable" to portray oneself as religious.

With regard to parental influences, it may be first noted that neither the control nor the affection dimension on the part of either parent adds anything to the prediction of the Practice aspect of religiousness. Parents' own religious practice seems to capture all of the predictive power of parental influence.

For the Intrinsic aspect of religiousness, mother's affection appears to be the most important of the parental variables, for both sexes. Additionally, perceived control on the part of the same-sex parent is predictive. For girls, then, it appears that the mother has the primary influence in defining religion as "relevant" in everyday life. For boys, the father's controlling role is more important.

The situation is rather reversed in the case of Orthodoxy. For both boys and girls, the father, if seen as controlling (and, thus, an authority figure), tends to be instrumental in facilitating the perception of God and Church as sources of authority.

The sex-role identity measures are predictive of religiousness only for boys. For them, the degree to which they see themselves as religious seems to depend at least in part on whether they define themselves as "macho" males, as active and energetic, as "feminine" (in the sense of helping, generous, friendly), etc. Thus, the Activity dimension of sex-roles is positively related to both Orthodoxy and Practice. However, while attendance at services (Practice) conforms well with the Activity aspect of masculinity, the Potency aspect does not fit-- boys with "macho hangup" tend to view religious services as not a manly activity.

The Cognitive aspect of religiousness conforms well with a more passive sex-role, i.e. feminine sex-role, or what Bakan(1969) calls the communion side of the human duality.

Unlike the sex-role variables, the interpersonal style measures are more predictive of religiousness in girls than in boys. In particular, the Extraverted and the Rule-bound dimensions are the important correlates. The latter has very strong predictive power for Intrinsic religion and Orthodoxy. It seems that girls tend to view religion as relevant to daily life in the sense that it provides rules for decision-making.

For boys, only the Socialized dimension is related to religiousness -- the Intrinsic and Cognitive aspects. The content of this scale suggests a self-image of inner harmony and of general positive outlook.

Finally, it may be interesting to note that, considering all significant predictors of religiousness for boys and girls, the Intrinsic aspect is more predictable for girls than boys, whereas the opposite is true in the case of the Cognitive aspect. It appears that, generally, parental, sex-role and interpersonal correlates of religiousness for the two sexes show markedly different patterns.

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Table 1

Four rotated factors of religiousness items
for Catholic adolescents (N=641)

	I	II	III	IV
1 Years studied religion	00	-30	10	00
2 God punishes people who sin	05	50	00	10
3 Bible is God's word to be obeyed	26	68	01	12
4 God is like a father who loves us	33	57	18	09
5 Church authorities represent God	26	58	12	05
6 Attendance at religious services	13	07	63	11
7 Church activities participation	06	09	22	31
8 Practice of prayer	40	11	28	25
9 Religion weighed in personal problems	37	06	07	35
10 Feels God's closeness	47	20	20	32
11 Religion influences each day	51	11	12	32
12 Believes in life after death	18	04	18	05
13 Certain God exits	42	28	31	04
14 Accepts faith without question	22	28	00	10
15 God controls everything	39	27	19	03
16 Nothing more important than religion	42	14	21	15
17 Faith involves all my life	58	11	09	26
18 Asks God's guidance in decisions	60	24	12	10
19 Tries to be child of God	49	14	09	13
20 Believes teachings of Church	50	32	02	18
21 Just to lead moral life is enough	-04	-12	-15	00
22 To serve God is most important	66	23	04	14
23 Religion answers questions on life	67	20	06	15
24 Asks God to forgive sins	33	19	19	35
25 Often takes Holy Communion	18	14	65	08
26 Often reads Bible	10	13	-01	44
27 In decisions does God's will	41	08	05	41
28 Talks about religion with friends	22	-04	-06	46
29 Reads literature on faith	10	08	08	55

Notes
a Decimal points omitted
b Items in table are abbreviated for conciseness
c Loadings of items used in scores are underlined

Table 2

Means, sigmas, and significance of difference between boys (N=297) and girls (N=344) on four scales of religiousness and selected parental influence, sex-role and interpersonal indices

Scale	Boys Mean	Boys Sigma	Girls Mean	Girls Sigma	p
Intrinsic	33.12	6.36	32.16	5.87	.05
Orthodoxy	16.74	3.09	16.04	2.83	.01
Practice	8.48	1.99	8.95	1.67	.01
Cognitive	7.57	2.83	6.90	2.37	.01
Father control	21.01	4.24	20.16	4.27	.05
Father affection	35.00	5.49	35.32	6.12	ns
Mother control	20.36	4.21	20.40	4.21	ns
Mother affection	36.32	4.24	35.89	5.55	ns
Activity	10.07	1.79	9.83	1.76	ns
Potency	7.42	1.40	6.05	1.56	.001
Sociability	15.85	2.05	16.10	1.83	ns
Expressiveness	8.98	1.80	9.96	1.69	.001
All-good self	19.48	2.74	18.74	2.68	.001
Extraverted	24.84	5.92	29.47	5.96	.001
Socialized	55.92	10.26	65.69	10.67	.001
Independent	12.41	3.52	12.49	3.92	ns
Rule-bound	9.43	2.68	8.76	3.07	.01
Open-minded	11.25	2.47	12.35	2.35	.001

Table 3

Incremental predictive utility of parental, sex-role and interpersonal variables, entered in the order listed, for the prediction of four aspects of religiousness among adolescent boys and girls (N=297,344 respectively)

Religion aspect	Intrinsic		Orthodoxy		Practice		Cognitive	
Predictor	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Age				.045	.023	.014	.016	.011
F relig practice	.054	.083	.046	.020	.327	.331		.019
M relig practice								
All-good self	.028	.031	.018		.010		.032	.012
F control	.015		.030	.013				
F affection				.030				
M control		.017					.023	
M affection	.019	.048	.012				.018	
Activity			.024		.036		.014(-)	
Potency					.011(-)			
Sociability							.030	
Expressiveness								
Extraverted		.012						.023
Socialized	.033						.032	
Independent								
Rule-bound		.043		.027				
Open-minded								
R2	.149	.223	.129	.135	.408	.345	.165	.066

Notes
a Coefficients are squared semipartial correlations of variables with criteria
b All coefficients shown are significant at least at the p .05 level